

**X.**

### **The Investigation**

Salvador and I had to miss classes on Monday because of all the questions we had to answer. An officer from campus police drilled us both, and I gave him the same answers I gave the officers who had arrived first at the scene. This meant reiterating my embarrassing nightmare story for a third time, but the consistency of it seemed to help my argument. I hoped Salvador had the good judgement to tell them about his sleepwalking like he had told me.

They finally let me go at about noon, and as much as I wanted to sleep, I couldn't risk wrecking my sleep schedule by sleeping all day, so I went to get lunch and coffee instead. I waited outside for Salvador to join me, and the two of us went off together, passing a detail of campus security on the way.

They were standing near a black car with windows tinted so dark that you couldn't see the interior. A government license plate graced the bumper; FBI. The cops were talking to two figures who had their backs to us. The taller one was a man. A fox with short dark hair and a long black trench coat. Beside him was a woman, about a head shorter, with shoulder-length red hair. I couldn't make out her species. I overheard them say something about paranormal investigation, but I didn't stick around. Being interrogated by campus police was bad enough, the FBI would be worse.

"Sheesh, FBI? For me?" Salvador asked as he looked back over his shoulder at the two agents.

"I think there's something else going on here. A student missing for a few hours isn't enough of a reason to get the FBI involved," I told him.

"Something else like what?"

"Not sure, but there's no way they're here just for you."

"Well we should probably just leave it alone," Salvador suggested as he opened the door to the cafeteria for me.

"Probably." I had already pulled out my phone and was looking up the latest headlines. "Death of college student marks third in an unexplained chain," I rattled off, skimming. "Medical professionals have yet to find cause of disease that brings about sudden lethargy, followed by death within a week..."

"Like Allie's math teacher's son?" Salvador asked as he grabbed a bowl and filled it with soup.

"Yeah. All three victims so far have been males in their early twenties. Two of them were attending this university." I paused and thought about Jason Astor, and the email my mom's friend had sent. His passing matched the description in the article, and he lived only an hour away by car. I grabbed myself a couple of burgers and a pile of fries.

"It sounds like a disease," my roommate butted in, breaking my train of thought.

"If it was a disease, FEMA would be here, not the FBI. FBI means investigation, and investigation means murder."

"You've been watching way too many police procedurals on Netflix," Salvador said as he took a seat. I sat across from him and set my food down.

"Maybe, but come on, you gotta admit it's weird." I picked up a burger and shoved it into my mouth, taking a huge bite and mulling it over with my thoughts.

“Leave it to the professionals. Do you think the FBI is going to appreciate you getting involved?” Salvador asked as he started eating his soup, blowing on every spoonful to cool it off. “Also, if it really is a murder investigation, I think it would be pretty reckless to go hunting after a killer on your own.”

I grimaced. “That’s a good point.” I chomped down some fries before speaking again. “I wasn’t going to be doing field work or anything anyways. Just browse some internet forums and news websites,” I assured him.

“Guess I can’t stop you from doing that.” He sounded indignant. “Just be careful okay?”

“I will be, okay? Don’t worry, I’ll be fine.”

I was wrong.